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Jersey City Officials Notified of First Positive H1N1 Cases

JERSEY CITY – **Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy** has announced that Hudson County and local public health and school officials have received notification that **four residents of Jersey City** have been **confirmed positive for H1N1 Influenza virus**.

The individuals have recovered at home and observed home isolation precautions. Their family members and other close contacts are being monitored for any signs of illness. One of the individuals is an **11-year-old student at Academy One**, while another is a **7-month-old infant** who does not attend daycare.

The two other confirmed cases involve children who were traveling and became ill while away. Montana health officials notified Jersey City officials of a **6-year-old student from PS 28** who had a confirmed case of H1N1, while Utah health officials reported to Jersey City a confirmed case in a 13-year-old who became ill while traveling in that state. It was not clear what school that child attended.

“It is important to note that these individuals are past the point of contagion and were not in the schools at the time they were sick,” said **Mayor Healy**. “While this news is concerning, it is certainly not a cause for alarm. The most important thing people can do to limit the spread of H1N1 is to stay home from school or work if they are sick, cover their coughs and sneezes, and wash their hands regularly with soap and warm water.

The symptoms of H1N1 Influenza infection are: fever, headache, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea. Persons experiencing flu like symptoms can call their family doctor for guidance on whether they should make an appointment for evaluation and treatment. Those with severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing should call 911 or go to the emergency department for medical evaluation.

H1N1 Influenza virus can be treated with Oseltamavir (Tamiflu) and Zanamavir (Relenza). Both drugs need to be taken within 24-48 hours of symptom onset to be most effective and are available by prescription only.

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“The City of Jersey City is working very closely with Hudson Regional Health Commission, state and federal partners and the Jersey City Board of Education to monitor the situation and to take appropriate steps based on conditions as they develop,” said **Mayor Healy**. “We will continue to share current guidance and recommendations from the CDC with school officials and the public as this situation evolves, but urge people not to panic but to take the necessary steps to prevent illness.”

According to **Jersey City Superintendent of Schools Dr. Charles T. Epps Jr.**, “Current CDC guidance recommends that schools need not close due to H1N1 virus unless there are so many students or faculty absent that the school cannot function. Rather, it is vitally important for parents to keep their children home from school if they are experiencing symptoms and seek the advice of a healthcare provider. Parents have received a letter informing them of this situation, along with information about H1N1 symptoms and what to do if they think their child is ill. Parents can also visit the Board of Education website at www.jcboe.org for more information. We will continue to work with public health officials to bring the most updated information to the school community and the public in general.”

Public health officials recommend the following steps to prevent illness:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often using warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds
- Stay home if you are sick. Do not go to work or school. **The CDC recommends persons with H1N1 infection stay home from school or work for 7 days after symptoms begin or 24-48 hours after symptoms end, whichever is longer**
- Stay informed: Visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu , www.nj.gov/health , or www.hudsonregional.org for current information on H1N1 Influenza Virus

H1N1 influenza virus of swine origin is different from seasonal human influenza A (H1N1) viruses. The viruses that we are seeing are a novel strain and it appears people do not have immunity to it, nor does it appear that this year’s seasonal influenza vaccine affords any protection. This H1N1 virus contains genetic pieces from four virus sources: North American swine influenza viruses, North American avian influenza viruses, human influenza viruses and swine influenza viruses found in Asia and Europe. This particular genetic combination of swine influenza virus segments has not been recognized before in the United States or anywhere else worldwide.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.

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